

Lard Pie Crust Recipe

Here's a basic recipe for pie dough, plus a crash course in Making Pie Crust 101. Try your hand at making a charming lattice-topped pie, but get your camera ready. The finished pie will be so beautiful you'll want to snap a photo for your scrapbook.

Makes 4 single or 2 9-inch double crusts

Ingredients:

3 cups all-purpose unbleached flour
1 teaspoon salt
1 1/4 cups lard, cold and coarsely chopped
1 egg
5 1/2 tablespoons water
1 teaspoon vinegar

Instructions:

In a large bowl, combine the flour and salt. Using a pastry blender, cut in the lard until the mixture is very fine. In a separate bowl, beat together the egg, water, and vinegar.

Make a small well in the flour mixture and add the liquid; mix just until the dough comes together in a ball. Divide the dough into 4 equal pieces and flatten into disks; wrap individually in plastic and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes before rolling.

To make a double-crust pie with a solid top crust, roll out 2 disks of dough about 1 inch larger than the pie plate. Fit one crust into the bottom of the pie plate. Fill the pie with the desired filling; slightly moisten the edge of the bottom crust. Take the second crust, fold it in half, gently place it over the pie filling, and unfold, centering it on the pie plate; press the edges into the bottom crust to seal. Trim the excess dough to leave an overhang of about 3/4 inch. Crimp or flute the edges with your fingers. To allow steam to escape, gently prick the top crust with a fork several times or slash vents with a sharp knife.

For a lattice-top crust, roll the second crust to a diameter of about 13 inches (for a 9-inch pie) and cut the dough into eighteen 1/2-inch-wide strips. Fill the pie and slightly moisten the edge of the bottom crust. Place 9 strips evenly across the filling, leaving space between and allowing the excess to hang over the edge of the bottom crust. Trim the excess dough and press the ends of the strips into the edge of the bottom crust to seal. Place the other 9 strips across the first set in a crisscross pattern; trim and press the second set of strips to seal. Fold up the bottom crust to cover the ends of the lattice strips, then crimp or flute with your fingers.

To make a glazed top crust, beat 1 egg white and brush on the unbaked top crust; sprinkle with sugar.

For a brown crust, brush the unbaked top crust with milk or cream, then sprinkle with sugar.

Bake the pies according to the recipe.